

Early Daoist Ideas on Political Practice: How to Select and Control Government Officials*

Barbara Hendrichske

Abstract

This paper is based on material contained in the *Scripture on Great Peace* that was produced in the second century C.E. The paper's argument proceeds from the supposition that the authors of the *Scripture* reflected on and responded to the political and administrative situation of the second century. It is argued that its authors joined in the critique that was put forth by their contemporaries, many of whom deplored the breakdown of the Han empire's institutions and the people's growing misery and despair. The authors of the *Scripture* claimed that a new era of great peace was close at hand but that before its arrival men had to undertake a set of reforms. Certain reforms pertained to the administrative system. The authors suggested to revise the process of appointing officials, to intensify the submission of memorials and reports, and to increase the size and rigidity of penalties for administrative misconduct, based on regular interrogations and on the creation and submission of reports, among them the "Reports Submitted to Heaven, Earth and Men" (*sandao xingshu* 三道行書). These reforms were meant to be in the people's interest and reduce their resentment and opposition. Major points were the suggestion to open access

Barbara Hendrichske is a visiting fellow and casual lecturer at the School of Languages and Linguistics and the School of History and Philosophy of the University of New South Wales, Sydney.

* Thanks are due to Jean Taylor and the UNSW Asia Research Group for listening to a draft version of the paper, to Terry Kleeman and two anonymous reviewers for pertinent suggestions and corrections and to Sue Wiles for making the paper readable.

to officialdom to a wider range of people and the demand to make more use of outside observers to control the conduct of officials. In developing their argument the authors referred to the laws, the rules, and the will of heaven, which for them represented the highest authority. For the authors of the *Scripture*, times were in rapid change. In their eyes the ideal official combined the virtues of the past with those of the future age of great peace: he was expected to be loyal, responsible, and trustworthy, and he was also expected to make sure that his superior would lead a long, healthy, and carefree life and if possible even transcend death to live among heaven's immortals.

Keywords: *Scripture on Great Peace*; great peace; employment of officials; reports submitted to heaven, earth and men; facing interrogations

早期道教實踐：官員的任用和管理

芭芭拉·亨德施克 (Barbara Hendrichske)

摘要

本文以公元二世紀的著作《太平經》為背景材料，假定其作者對當時的政局及行政狀況進行了反思和回應，並就此展開論述。文章認為，《太平經》的作者參與了同一時代人提出的評論，這批人大多譴責漢王國機構的瓦解和每況愈下的人民生活。《太平經》的作者稱，太平的新時代即將來臨，人們需要通過系列的改革為迎接新時代做好準備，這其中就涉及到行政體制的改革。他們建議修改官員任用的流程，加速議事及報告的提交，加重對行政瀆職的懲罰。這一過程主要通過常規審訊和撰寫及提交報告來執行，此類報告中包括《三道行書》。這些改革旨在以民眾利益為先，減輕人民的怨恨和反抗。建議的重點在於放寬官員選拔範圍，並利用外在的監督機制控制官員行為。《太平經》作者就法律、制度，以及代表最高權威的天意等方面進行了論述。在他們看來，時代充滿着飛速的變化，理想的官員應該集先人的美德和後世太平的特點於一身：要忠誠，可靠，富有責任感，同時要能確保上級健康長壽、安枕無憂，如果可能的話，甚至超越死亡，上天成仙。

關鍵詞：《太平經》、太平、任臣、三道行書、見對